

True Northerner.

S. T. CONWAY, EDITOR.

PAW PAW, MICHIGAN, Dec. 27, 1872

THE Massachusetts Legislature has passed resolutions condemnatory of Senator Charles Sumner's course in presenting to Congress a bill providing for the removal of all inscriptions from the Army Register and National Regimental Flags relating to the rebellion. The resolutions were passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 104 yeas to 74 nays, and in the Senate by a vote of 20 yeas to 9 nays. A debate was had on the propriety and expediency of passing the resolutions of censure, which was participated in by nearly every member of the House and every Senator; hence this action of Massachusetts, by her Legislature, may be regarded as a very fair index of the sentiment of the old Bay State, regarding this action of Mr. Sumner.

M. M. POMEROY (Brick, of Pomeroys Democrat) sends us a specimen of his paper and writes us that he would be pleased to have us give our opinion of the paper, etc. Well, our opinion is, that the paper fills a want in the newspaper world—that is, it supplies a class of individuals, whose delight it is to find fault with everything done by the administration or the doings of prominent or good men, with arguments for that purpose.

His gross and malignant attacks on all classes of men, politicians whose faith differs from his, and clergymen and prominent, and noted philanthropists and church members are just adapted to the taste and disposition of a class, though small in every community, yet aggregate into a large number of individuals. It is of these that he finds his readers and patrons; and these he leads, so as to speak, with the ammunition with which they are constantly shooting their pop-gun charges against the present order of society, politics and religion.

He is also in the habit of making decided hits against abuses and wrong doing, and in illustration of this we quote the following:

"Business men go around New York cheating each other all day and call that business. The man who cheats the most, robs the most, steals the most, selects the next biggest thieves, forms a rig, buys courts, jurors, judges, legislatures, etc., and tells justice to go to thunder."

And again: "If you will write in bold style a huge placard, frame it in brass, elevate it on a pole or Church steeple, employ a brass band to help call attention to it, that the multitude may read—"

"Hear ye! hear ye! Read ye, all men!"

"Take Notice—That I, J. Gould, king of railroad robbers, can steal ten millions of dollars a year, and not be caught or punished, because my money gives me influence."

And this: "The boy in the country steals a hen to keep his sick mother in broth, while he is away earning meat. The officer of the law moves on his trial and lodges him in prison, while the honest mother weeps her life away."

"The young man in the city, bred to the ways of a snobbish society, writes the names of other men, abstracts money from the safe of a bank or other corporation, takes his fruit from the other side of the hedge from where the minister plucks, then is feted by a hundred aspiring mammas, each eager to furnish him a victim and called the elect."

The Democrat is furnished at two dollars and a half a year, and contains not as much reading as the True Northerner does for one dollar and a half.

The Popular Capacity for Scandal.

One of the most saddening and humiliating exhibitions which human nature ever makes of itself, is in its greedy credulity touching all reports of the misdeeds of good men. If a man stand high as a moral force in the community; if he stand as the rebuke and denouncer of social and political sin; if he be looked up to by any considerable number of people as an example of virtue; if the whole trend and power of his life be in a high and pure direction; if his personality and influence render any allegation against his character most improbable, then most readily does any such allegation find eager believers. It matters not from what source the slander may come. Multitudes will be influenced by a report against a good man's character from one who would not be believed under oath in any matter involving the pecuniary interest of fifty cents. The slanderer may be notoriously base—may be a pandarer to the worst passions and the lowest vices—may be a shameless sinner against social virtue—may be a thief, a notorious liar, a drunkard, a libertine, or a harlot—all this matters nothing. The white object at which the foul discharges are aimed is also seen; and the delight of the by-standers and lookers-on is measured by the success of the stain sought to be inflicted.

As between the worldling and the man who professes to be guided and controlled by Christian motives, all this is natural enough. The man bound up in his selfish and sensual delights, who sees a Christian fall, or hears the report that he has fallen, is naturally comforted in the belief that, after all, men are alike—that no one of them, however much he may profess, is better than another. It is quite essential to his com-

fort that he cherish and fortify himself in this conviction. So, when any great scandal arises in quarters where he has found himself and his course of life condemned, he listens with ready ears, and is unmistakably glad. We say this is natural, however base and malignant it may be; but when people are reputed good—nay, people professing to be Christian—shrug their virtuous shoulders and shake their feeble heads, while a foul scandal touches vitally the character of one of their own number, and menaces the extinguishment of an influence, higher or humbler, by which the world is made better, we hang our heads with shame, or raise them with indignation. If such a thing as this is natural, it proves just one thing, viz., that these men are hypocrites. There is no man, Christian or Pagan, who can rejoice in the faintest degree over the reputed fall of any other man from rectitude, without being at heart a scamp. All this readiness to believe evil of others, especially of those who have been reputed to be eminently good, is an evidence of conscious weakness under temptation, or of conscious proclivity to vice that finds comfort in eminent companionship.

There is no better test of purity and true goodness than reluctance to think evil of one's neighbor, and absolute incapacity to believe an evil report about good men except upon the most trustworthy testimony. Alas, that this large and lovely charity is so rare! But it is only with those who possess this charity that men accused of sins against society have an equal chance with those accused, under the forms of law, of crime. Every man brought to trial for crime is presumed to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty; but, with the world at large, every man slandered is presumed to be guilty until he proves himself to be innocent, and even then it takes the liberty of doubting the testimony. Every man who rejoices in a scandal thereby advertises the fact of his own untrustworthiness; and every man who is pained by it, and refuses to be impressed by it, unconsciously reveals his own purity. He cannot believe a bad thing done by one whom he regards as a good man, simply because he knows he would not do it himself. He gives credit to others for the virtue that is consciously in his own possession, while the base men around him, whether Christian in name or not, withhold that credit because they cannot believe in the existence of a virtue of which they are consciously empty. When the Master uttered the words, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone at her," he knew that none but conscious delinquents would have the disposition to do so; and when, under this rebuke, every fierce accuser retired overwhelmed, he, the sinless, wrote the woman's crime in the sand for the heavenly rains to efface. If he could do this in a case of guilt not disputed, it certainly becomes his followers to stand together around every one of their number whom malice or revenge assails with slanders to which his or her whole life gives the lie.

In a world full of influences and tendencies to evil, where every good force is needed, and needs to be jealously cherished and guarded, there is no choicer treasure and no more beneficent power than a sound character. This is not only the highest result of all the best forces of our civilization, but it is the builder of those forces in society and the State. Society cannot afford to have it wasted or destroyed; and its instinct of self-preservation demands that it shall be suffered. There is nothing so sensitive and nothing so sacred as character; and every tender charity, and loyal friendship, and chivalrous affection, and manly sentiment and impulse, ought to interpose themselves around every true character in the community so thoroughly that a breath of calumny shall be as harmless as an idle wind. If they cannot do this, then no man is safe who refuses to make terms with the devil, and he is at liberty to pick his victims where he will.—J. G. Holland; Scribner's Free Library.

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Kalamazoo, Mich., Nov. 1, 1872. 918m

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Nov. 20, 1872. 9221m

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